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THE SOCIAL ORGANISATION

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would, if living with the man's parents, pay a visit every year to the parents or other relatives of the wife. The parents of a child that had been adopted by a member of another local group would make a point of visiting the child when they could. Visitors to a camp would always take with them presents to be given to their hosts. A visitor was hospitably entertained, being given the best of the food, and joined his hosts in their hunting and fishing expeditions. The duty of hospitality is one upon which the Andamanese lay stress.

The meetings of two or more local groups were organised from time to time by the more prominent men. The time and place of the meeting would be fixed and invitations sent out to the neighbours. The visitors, men, women and children, would arrive at the appointed time, and would be accommodated as well as possible by the hosts. During the first few hours, as the natives themselves told me, everyone would feel a little shy and perhaps frightened, and it would take some time for this feeling to wear off. The visitors would bring with them various objects, such as bows, arrows, adzes, baskets, nets, red paint, white clay, and so on. These were given by the visitors to their hosts, and other presents were received in return. Although the natives themselves regarded the objects thus given as being presents, yet when a man gave a present to another he expected that he would receive something of equal value in return, and would be very angry if the return present did not come up to his expectations. A man would sometimes mention, when giving his present, that he would like some particular object in exchange, but this was the exception and not the rule, and the process cannot be spoken of as barter. In certain cases it undoubtedly served a useful economic purpose. Thus if a local group had no red ochre or white clay in their own country they could obtain these commodities by exchange with others who had. In the case of a meeting between forest and coast dwellers, the former could obtain such things as shells, red paint made with turtle fat, and other objects with which they could not provide themselves in any other way. It was in this way also that the iron obtained from a wreck on one part of the coast would be spread over a large area. For the most part, however, as

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● 437 each local group, and indeed each family, was able to provide itself with everything that it needed in the way of weapons and utensils, the exchange of presents did not serve the same purpose as trade and barter in more developed communities.

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431 The purpose that it did serve was a moral one. The object of the exchange was to produce a friendly feeling between the two persons concerned, and unless it did this it failed of its purpose. It gave great scope for the exercise of tact and courtesy. No one was free to refuse a present that was offered to him. Each man and woman tried to out-do the others in generosity. There was a sort of amiable rivalry as to who could give away the greatest number of valuable presents.

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527 The visitors remained with their hosts for a few days. The time was spent in hunting, feasting and dancing, and in the exchange of presents above described. The hosts made every effort to provide the camp with plenty of good things. The guests took their share in the hunting and fishing expeditions. Every evening was spent in singing and dancing. Some of the men were sure to have composed new songs for such an occasion.

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628 Such meetings as these were sometimes the means of bringing to an end past quarrels between the local groups, but occasionally they were the cause of new quarrels. The hosts, or some of them, might think that they had been shabbily treated in the matter of presents, or the guests might complain that they were not well enough entertained. It often needed a man of strong influence to maintain harmony in the camp. Angry words might lead to the rapid breaking up of a meeting, and even result in a feud between the two groups.

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628 Quarrels between individuals, as we have seen, were often taken up by friends on each side. This was particularly the case when the two opponents belonged to different local groups. Before the days of the settlement of the islands there often arose in this way petty quarrels between neighbouring local groups. In some instances there appear to have been feuds of long standing; in others there was a quarrel, a fight or two, and the enemies made peace with one another, until a fresh cause of disagreement should arise.

619 neighbouring tribe, an express invitation or permission is required,
486 unless, indeed, the party entering happens to be accompanied by
one or more members of the district visited, or when, from long
and friendly intercommunication, a right of way has been tacitly
sanctioned. In cases where there has been a breach of this
observance sharp retribution has generally followed, causing
sometimes serious loss of life, and resulting in a long-standing
tribal feud.

619 3. Those communities of *ērem-lā-ga-* and *dryō-to-*, living
578 within a few miles of each other and speaking the same dialect,
437 arrange from time to time large gatherings—generally numbering
about a hundred persons¹—for purposes of barter, or for the
celebration of some particular event. Though not unfrequently
on these occasions old enmities are healed and friendships
formed, fresh tribal feuds and personal quarrels sometimes
originate in consequence of a misunderstanding or dispute over
some comparative trifle.²

487 4. There are numerous paths intersecting each territory, the
result of continuous traffic over the same ground. [When, for
some reason, a new course is taken through the jungle, the route
is indicated to those following by bending the twigs of the
brushwood in a *reverse* direction at intervals along the track.
This is especially the case during the dry season, when, owing
to the parched condition of the soil, there is some difficulty in
distinguishing footprints.³

212 5. No marks on rocks, trees or other objects, made for pur-
poses of record, are believed by them to exist, and, with the
exception of the supposititious hieroglyphics,⁴ hereafter to be
mentioned, nothing of the nature of writing is to be found
among these tribes, nor have they any method of recording the
name and exploits of a deceased chief or other individual who
may have gained distinction during his life, save the narration
—more or less garbled—of the same by their admiring descend-
ants. The messenger who conveys intelligence to a distant
encampment bears no outward token with him to testify to the
authenticity or character of the communication he has to make.

211 6. Although no method of signs exists, such as tying knots in
411 a string, making notches in a tally, or figures on wood, bark, or
stone, they have means of distinguishing arrows and spears
belonging to one another, by certain differences peculiar to each

¹ It is believed that no larger number than 300 has ever been assembled at one time in any place in our vicinity, at least since our advent.

² *Fide post* "Games and Amusements," paragraphs 24 and 37.

³ No prejudice exists in respect to crossing water, going by certain paths, or handling particular objects, excepting the *Anadendrum paniculatum*. *Fide post*, Part III, "String," paragraph 3.

⁴ *Fide* "Mythology," paragraph 29.

• 437 5. They set no fixed value on their various properties, and
431 rarely make or procure anything with the express object of disposing of it in barter. Apparently they prefer to regard their transactions as presentations, for their mode of negotiating is to *give* such objects as are desired by another in the hope of receiving in return something for which they have expressed a wish, it being tacitly understood that, unless otherwise mentioned beforehand, no "present" is to be accepted without an equivalent being rendered.

[578] 6. The natural consequence of this system is that most of the quarrels which so frequently occur among them originate in failure on the part of the recipient in making such a return as had been confidently expected.¹

7. All iron-pointed weapons, tools, or shell ornaments are eagerly accepted by the *ērem-tá'ga*- in exchange for such things as are more easily procured by them than by the *āryóto*:-² for instance, an adze would generally be considered worth two ordinary bows, or a bundle of wooden-pointed arrows; or a man might undertake to make a canoe or bucket for one who would give him an adze.

428 8. But little care is taken of the utensils, weapons, canoes,
422 &c., in daily use, and consequently new ones are often required, the old, when no longer serviceable, being thrown aside; as all their possessions consist of goods which need to be more or less frequently replaced, it is hardly necessary to explain that there is no accumulation of the labours of former generations; hence also it arises that they are not tied by any laws of inheritance; more as a matter of sentiment than for any other reason, the nearest of kin takes possession of all the effects left by a deceased person, and as often as not they are distributed ere long among such friends as may be in need of any of the articles in question.

422 9. The weapons, tools, and other property pertaining to one member of a family are regarded as available for the use of his or her relatives, but such articles as a cooking-pot, canoe, or sounding-board, when not required by the owner, are looked upon somewhat in the light of public property by members of the same community; in short, the rights of private property are only so far recognised that no one would without permission appropriate or remove to a distance anything belonging to a friend or neighbour.

000 Agriculture.—1. Before the arrival of strangers in their midst,

¹ *Ide post* "Games and Amusements," paragraph 37.

² Further mention of this will be made at "Games and Amusements," paragraph 24. As will there be explained, the occasions on which they usually barter are when they meet for a *jeu*-at some permanent encampment.

372 they show much skill in so carrying smouldering logs with them by land or sea that they are not extinguished. Their ignorance of this fundamental requirement of civilization is shown in their fire-legend that fire was originally stolen from their deity Puluga and has never been allowed to become extinct since. Excepting guns, nothing has more impressed the Andamanese with European power and resources than the use of matches, i.e., of making fire whenever required with ease.

342 In the Little Andaman and among the Jarawas of the South Andaman, large permanent huts for use in the wet season are built up of solid materials to 30 feet in height and 60 in breadth to hold the fires of 7 to 8 hunting parties, say 60 to 70 people, i.e., they contain 7 to 8 fires with about 8 persons to each "fire." The Jarawa hunting camp is much the same as that of any other Andamanese and his great communal hut is built on the same principle as the larger huts of the other Andamanese.

The use of the flimsy hunting shelters and camp huts of the Andamanese is rendered possible in the wet and stormy weather so common in the Islands by the denseness of the jungle, which prevents the winds from reaching them even when close to the sea-beach and causes the rain to fall vertically upon them.

619 Government.—There is no idea of Government, but to each tribe and to each sept of it there is a recognised head, who has attained that position by tacit agreement on account of some admitted superiority, mental or physical, and commands a limited respect and such obedience as the self interest of the other individual men of the tribe or sept dictates. There is a tendency to hereditary right in the natural selection of chiefs; but there is no social status that is not personally acquired. The social position of a chief's family follows that of the chief himself and admits of many privileges in the shape of tribal influence and immunity from drudgery. His wife is among women what he is among men and at his death, if a mother and not young, she retains his privileges. Age commands respect and the young are deferential to the elders. Offences, i.e., murder, theft, adultery, mischief, assault, are punished by the aggrieved party on his own account by injury to the body and property or by murder, without more active interference on the part of others than is consistent with their own safety, and without any fear of consequences except vengeance from the friends of the other side, and even this is usually avoided by disappearance till the short memory of the people has obliterated wrath.

[554] Property is communal, as is all the land, and ideas as to individual possessions are but rudimentary, accompanied with an incipient tabu of the property belonging to a chief. An Andamanese will often readily part with ornaments to any one who asks for them. Theft, or the taking of property without leave, is only recognised as to things of absolute necessity, as arrows, pig's flesh, fire. A very rude barter exists between tribes of the same group in regard to articles not locally obtainable or manufactured. This applies especially to cooking pots, which are made of a special clay found only in certain parts of the islands. The barter is really a gift of one article in expectation of another of assumed corresponding value in return, and a row if it is not forthcoming. The territory of other tribes is carefully respected without however there being any fixed boundaries.

421 The duties of men and women are clearly defined by custom, but not so as to make that of the women comparatively hard. The women have a tacitly acknowledged inferior position, but it is not such as to be marked or to leave them without influence.

437 Religion.—The religion is simple animism and consists of fear of the evil spirits of the wood, the sea, disease and ancestors, and of avoidance of acts traditionally displeasing to them, and this in spite of an abundance of mythological tales told in a confused, disjointed manner that is most instructive to the student of such things. There is neither ceremonial worship nor propitiation. There is an anthropomorphic deity, Puluga, the cause of all things, whom it is not, however, necessary to propitiate, though sins, i.e., acts displeasing to him, are avoided for fear of damage to the products of the jungle. Puluga dwells now in the sky, but used to live on the top of Saddle Peak, their highest mountain. The Andamanese have an idea that the "soul" will go under the earth by an aerial bridge after death, but there is no heaven nor hell nor any idea of a cor-

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THE ANDAMAN ISLANDERS

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or form of numerical evaluation is further support for the extremely low stage of cultural development at which they became isolated.

22. ART

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When painting their bodies with ochre the Onges have no idea of symbolic representation, and use only geometrical designs. These invariably seem spontaneous, and in my view do not represent a degenerate form of some more highly evolved art, half forgotten over the centuries; in short, the 'artists' of the Andamans, with no conception of symbolism, are even today less advanced than their Palaeolithic counterparts.

23. DIGGING STICKS

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In late Palaeolithic deposits, stones with holes in them have been found which correspond to those still in use among peoples such as the Bushmen, to add weight to their digging sticks. The absence even today of any form of weighted stick in the Andamans, where stone is plentiful, would appear to antedate the culture at least to early Palaeolithic.

24. HUNTING

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The Onges still use the Palaeolithic throwing stick, although it is not their main hunting weapon. They have no idea of fixed traps, which must from the evidence have been known in Palaeolithic times, and it is hard to believe that a people so dependent upon hunting would have lost the art once it had been acquired. They have crude nets which the women use for fishing, but these are probably a comparatively recent introduction, which has arrived via the Nicobars.

25. DOMESTIC ANIMALS

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The Andamanese have none, and this would seem to add weight to the evidence for their great antiquity.

26. ECONOMY

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There is no economic system of any kind, and from the evidence available it is highly unlikely that even the most primitive form ever existed. There is no conception whatever of providing for tomorrow, or of any form of exchange or barter.